

Incident Micro Purchasing
Commonly Asked Questions and Answers

Part 1-7/14/2021

Q: Do I need a Resource Order for every purchase I make?

A: Yes, anytime you will be using a fire job code (non-project code) you must have authorization which is what the Resource Order gives you.

Q: What should I do if I am not sure whether my order will exceed my threshold?

A: That will be your responsibility to always ask the vendor for pricing (inclusive of delivery/shipping and any other fees) prior to completing the order.

Q: What if I am told that my order has or will exceed my threshold?

A: Do not continue, save any information you have regarding the order/supplies or services and reach out to your Dispatch Center to have the order reassigned to the AIMS Team for warranted support.

Q: Are Meals a supply or service?

A: Meals are considered a supply.

Q: Is lodging a supply or service?

A: Lodging has been a service in the past however recent updated direction has deemed lodging to be a supply (with official written guidance forthcoming).

Q: What is the Budget Object Code for Meals and Lodging?

A: The BOC is 2131 for incident meals and lodging (includes sack lunches).

Q: What is a standing order?

A: Standing orders are used when a known quantity/known delivery time are established and not expected to vary or change. Once the quantity or delivery schedule changes, it is no longer considered a standing order and must be reordered through Dispatch with a new Resource Order. Be cautious when entering a standing order as a Micro Purchaser. If your standing order has the potential to exceed your threshold, you should be contacting Dispatch to have the order reassigned to a warranted procurement official.

Q: What is a NERV rental vehicle?

A: National Emergency Rental Vehicle which is a program/contract used for agency employees without travel cards.

Q: What if I get an order to set up an agreement for tire repair?

A: Most teams want an agreement or standing order set up for tire repair where they can get repairs and new tires anytime they need to and without coming through you every time for approval or having to complete a new resource order. Please work closely with your Incident Business Advisor on a process for filling this order. Often the process will include prior approvals decided on between the INBA and Comps and Claims on the IMT and Ground Support from the IMT will fill out required paperwork and send to Comps and Claims for approvals, then you will receive the order with all approved documents attached. This process normally is required for every tire repair and replacement; however, it will depend on how the Incident Business Advisor and Finance Team want it to be set up. It may also be a less restrictive process. The reason approvals may be required is that they are used as a tracking tool to make sure the fire isn't replacing tires for contractors or agency fleet where the damage may have been due to "normal wear and tear over time" rather than caused by the fire. Usually the largest use of this type of agreement would be for the NERV rental vehicles.

Q: When ordering sack lunches do we have to use certain specifications?

A: Yes, a vendor must be provided the specifications from the National Mobile Food Services Contract to meet the required calories to feed the firefighters which will also help the vendor provide an accurate quote. Sack lunches are exempt from the per diem rules and will many times come in at a higher price than regular sack lunches in the everyday market. Prices can fall all over the board with sack lunches depending on location, cost of supplies, etc. Cost ALWAYS matters, so pay attention and if you need to question or confer with the Incident Business Advisor, do so.

Q: What if I get an order to set up a fuel agreement with a local gas station?

A: Unless it is a small "Mom and Pop" station that can set up a special log and take payment every week or after 2-3 days it will be very difficult to find a corporate station to help you do this. They will require a credit card each time a vehicle comes in to fill up which is nearly impossible to make happen. Vehicles all come off the fire at different times and you may not be in the same location to meet everyone at the station for filling. The best way to handle this is always to have Dispatch order a fuel truck or tender. Many times, there will not be any available and something must happen in the interim. Another option might be to contact a local fuel delivery company and see if they could go through camp and fill up the incidental needs (generators, saw fuel, etc.) then set up each evening to fill the vehicles coming off the fire. Keep in mind that the only vehicles you should be filling would be the NERV rentals. Finally, get an idea of costs and if it will run over your threshold, send it back to Dispatch for assistance from the AIMS Team.

Q: If a local vendor can provide supplies or services but they are slightly higher in price should I use them or go to a large box store to save the Government money?

A: It depends on how much money we are talking about. Local small business vendor will often be slightly more expensive due to their location, freight/shipping costs for maintaining supplies, and other factors. If it's not price gouging, then you should always support the local small

business. If you aren't certain then the best solution would be to discuss with the Incident Business Advisor.

Q: Do I need to be ordered on a Resource Order through the Dispatch system to make purchases for an incident?

A: It depends, if you are ordering full time on an assignment then yes you should be ordered on a Resource Order. If you are at your local unit and only making purchases occasionally or intermittently then it would not be required. You should check with the Incident Business Advisor if your situation is questionable.

Q: If using a rewards card will save the Government money, am I allowed to do so?

A: No. Under no circumstances will you be allowed to use a rewards card on Government purchases. This is an ethics ruling.

Q: What if a vendor has charged a sales tax or room taxes on my invoice or purchase card?

A: The Federal Government is tax exempt. If you are purchasing in a state with a sales tax you will need to remind them of this and for lodging taxes you will need to provide the vendor with a tax exempt form when setting up your lodging request. (If allowed by the state as some states do not allow lodging tax to be waived). If your card has already been charged the taxes, you will need to contact the vendor and request a credit to your account. Always ask to speak to a manager.

Q: When can I pay a gratuity to a meal vendor?

A: A 15% Gratuity can be paid for sit down meals that require wait service. Gratuity is not allowed for sack lunches or take-out meals. The gratuity can be added on to the invoice by the vendor or it can be added to the total invoice by the Incident Micro Purchaser upon payment. ALWAYS audit your meal tickets prior to payment.

Q: How do I audit a meal ticket?

A: Let the vendor know you must audit each ticket prior to payment. If the vendor wants to send you with all the tickets, make sure they have made copies for themselves. Find a quiet space if possible and if you have stacks of them you might ask for someone (co-worker) to help you. Look for a crew manifest that you can match up signatures, each ticket should have a signature of the person eating and it should include the meal items or meal, and cost. If the cost has exceeded the allowed per diem amount and the vendor did not collect the difference from the firefighter then the vendor is responsible for that difference. This information should be discussed with the vendor and listed on the meal authorization form prior to firefighters arriving for the meal. You will also need to make sure there weren't any restricted items included in the meal ticket as in alcohol, tobacco, candy, gum, etc. When adding your prices up, calculate twice to double check your figures. Meal tickets/receipts can come in many ways, if you have a question don't hesitate to reach out to an experienced Buying Team Member or your LAPC for guidance.